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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effectiveness of a project to increase reading readiness skills. The targeted population consisted of kindergarten students in a growing middle class community located in northern Illinois. The problems of lack of reading readiness were documented through teacher observation and district assessment tools. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that children were lacking in literacy experiences due to a variety of environmental factors. These causes were documented by citations from professional literature and analysis of the site. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of three major categories of interventions: a parental involvement program; increased emphasis on writing skills; and a cross-age reading program with sixth-grade students. Post intervention data indicated an increase in reading readiness skills as measured by teacher observation and district assessment tools. (Contains 29 references, 6 tables, and 4 figures of data. Appendixes present survey instruments, newsletters, parent involvement materials, checklists, story guide questions, and evaluation forms.) (RS)

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IMPROVING READING READINESS THROUGH
READING AND WRITING

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master's of Arts in
Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight
Field-based Master's Program

Action Research Project
Site: Rockford, Illinois
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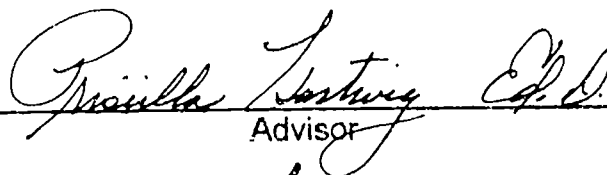
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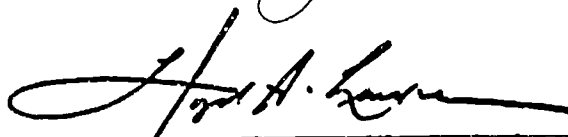
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Abstract

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Site: Rockford IV

Date: December 1995

Title: Improving Reading Readiness through Reading and Writing

This report described a project to increase reading readiness skills. The targeted population consisted of kindergarten students in a growing middle class community located in northern Illinois. The problems of lack of reading readiness were documented through teacher observation and district assessment tools.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that children were lacking in literacy experiences due to a variety of environmental factors. These causes were documented by citations from professional literature and analysis of the site.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of three major categories of intervention: a parental involvement program; increased emphasis on writing skills; and a cross-age reading program with 6th grade students.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in reading readiness skills as measured by teacher observation and district assessment tools.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The kindergarten students at the targeted elementary school lack reading readiness skills as evidenced by teacher observation and district assessment tools.

Immediate Problem Context

The targeted school was built in 1956, at which time it served as a combined junior high school and an elementary school. In 1966, eight elementary classrooms were added to the building, and in 1967 the junior high moved to a new facility. The targeted school was then divided into two elementary school organizations. In 1969 the school became one elementary school with 1,000 plus students as it remains today.

There are a total of 1,011 elementary students currently enrolled in the school. The students are in preschool through sixth grade classes. This school is one of six elementary school facilities in the community. The student population consists of 82.7 percent White, 14.7 percent Hispanic, one and nine-tenths percent Black, and seven-tenths of one percent

Asian students. Data concerning family socio-economic status indicate 23.5 percent are in the low income bracket. The school has an attendance rate of 95.4 percent with 12 chronic truancy problems. The student mobility rate is 20.7 percent (Belvidere C.U. School District 100, 1993).

The academic team consists of one principal, one assistant principal, 44 classroom teachers, five specialized teachers and eight teacher assistants. Support staff, in the building, includes two speech and language clinicians, three Chapter 1 teachers, one gifted instructor, one Transitional Program Instructor (TPI), three Learning Disability Resource teachers, one social worker, and one nurse. The school has five self-contained special education classrooms, one pre-kindergarten classroom, and one transition room between kindergarten and first grade. The administrative and teaching staff is 100 percent White. Years of teaching experience among this staff averages 17 years. Fifty-five percent of the teaching staff have a master's degree, 10 percent are presently enrolled in a master's program, and 35 percent have a bachelor's degree. The teacher-pupil ratio is 23 to one in kindergarten through second grade and 27.5 to one in third through sixth grade (Belvidere C.U. School District 100, 1993).

The school is located in a residential area. Some of the students are from the neighboring area, with the

remainder bussed in from surrounding subdivisions. Students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade are in self-contained classrooms. The school offers a curriculum in which the students are heterogeneously grouped. Time devoted to the teaching of core subjects, for a five day week in kindergarten, is as follows: reading and language arts, five hours; math, two and one-half hours. The district uses the Silver Burdett Ginn Reading Series and Addison Wesley Math Series for kindergarten through sixth grade. In addition, the kindergarten teachers use materials published from the Center for Innovation in Education, to teach phonics.

The Surrounding Community

The school district serves one city and the majority of one county with a combined population of 35,341. The median family income is \$38,586. The racial composition of the county is 95 percent White, six-tenths of one percent Black, and four and four-tenths of one percent other races. The Hispanic population of this community is calculated at six and four-tenths percent regardless of the racial mix. In other words, a pure Hispanic, a White/Hispanic mix, a Black/Hispanic mix, and so forth were included in that percentage (Growth Dimensions, 1993).

The community has experienced considerable residential growth in the last decade. Forty-five percent of migration into the community comes from a

very large metropolitan city and its suburban communities, 21 percent from communities within the state, 16 percent from other states, and 15 percent from an urban community within 15 miles (Growth Dimensions, 1993).

The community has a wide range of educational levels among the adult population. Twenty four and five-tenths percent have not completed high school, 40.1 percent are high school graduates, 35.3 percent have had higher education. The median family income is \$38,586 (Growth Dimensions, 1993).

The manufacturing sector employs 59 percent of the working population followed by retail trade at 16 percent, and service jobs at 13 percent. The unemployment rate for 1993 was nine and one-tenth percent (Growth Dimensions, 1993).

The school district is a community unit district. There is one high school, one junior high, six elementary schools, and one special education facility. Special education services are available to the mentally impaired, the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, the physically disabled, the speech and language impaired, and the learning disabled children. Student population of the school district was 4,840 in 1993. Due to the district's growing population, a new elementary school is scheduled to open in the fall of 1995 and one elementary school, after remodeling, will

double its capacity.

The central office administration consists of an appointed superintendent, an assistant superintendent of business, an assistant superintendent of curriculum, and a director of special education. The board of education is comprised of seven members of this community elected to four-year terms. Its responsibilities are to deal with budget, curriculum, staffing, facilities, and discipline.

Regional and National Context of Problem

The problem of reading readiness has generated concern at the state and national levels. In 1990, the president and governors of all 50 states declared, as a first objective for the nation, that by the year 2000, every child in America will start school "ready to learn" (Boyer, 1993). If this goal were to be realized, all the other education goals could also be fulfilled.

"Readiness can be characterized as a recurring theoretical and practical tug between two primary concepts: readiness to learn and readiness for school" (Kagan, 1992, p. 48). Developmentalists support the readiness-to-learn concept. They support the theory that students will learn only when they are developmentally ready to do so. Factors influencing this learning are attention, motivation, health, emotional maturity, intellectual ability, and developmental status (Kagan, 1992).

The readiness-for-school proponents have more specific cognitive and linguistic skills in mind (e.g. identifying colors, copying a square, and counting to 100). Readiness for school has usually been equated to reading readiness (Kagan, 1992).

States and districts, depending on which group they adhere to, will set their curriculum accordingly. Entrance dates are also influenced by these two schools of thought. Dates to begin school vary in districts and are changed periodically. Even delaying a child's entrance to school is justified by that child's lack of readiness.

Readiness has been a critical component of efforts to improve school accountability. This emphasis on accountability has led to excluding children who fail to demonstrate certain skills from attending school (Willer & Bredekamp, 1990). To support a child's development and learning and to prevent that child from failing in school, comprehensive efforts must be made in health, education and social services for all families. All of these are costly measures and, presently, are not being adequately addressed in our country.

Not only should children enter school ready to learn, but schools must be ready to help every child succeed. There will always be variances in skills and abilities of children entering school. Schools and teachers will need to develop curriculum and teaching

practices to meet these needs. A child's first experience in school will set the climate for success in succeeding years.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

In an attempt to document a lack of reading readiness in the targeted grade, three different surveys were given. The surveys were administered to the students involved in the study, to the kindergarten faculty, and to the parents of the targeted students.

Twenty-four kindergarten students were given five minutes to write a list of words. Fifty-four percent did not write any conventional form of words. Forty-six percent wrote one to six words. Examples of words written included their names, mom, dad, cat, dog, and sibling's names. Analysis of the data indicates the majority of students entering this kindergarten class lack writing skills in relation to reading readiness.

Using an observation form developed by the researcher (Appendix A), the students were observed in groups of six for 10 minutes to determine their knowledge of picture book usage. A summary of the skills and the number of students demonstrating these skills is presented in table one.

Table 1
Picture Book Observation

Skill	Number With Skill	Number Without Skill
Holds book correctly	22	2
Left to right progression	24	0
Looks at pictures	22	2
Makes verbal comments	8	16
Points to printed text	1	23

Of the 24 students observed, 94 percent demonstrated book awareness as evidenced by the way they held the book and looked at the pictures. Thirty-three percent verbally responded to the books. Four percent were aware of the printed text. Based on the observation, even though the majority of the students had exposure to books, they did not recognize the use of the printed text.

During the first week of school, parents were given a survey to determine the skills they perceived their child demonstrating upon entry to kindergarten (Appendix A). Of the 24 students in the class, 23 parents completed the survey for their child. A summary of the percentage of students demonstrating each skill, as reported by the parents, is presented in table two.

Table 2
Parent's Evaluation of Skills

Skill	Students With Skill
Can print first name	83%
Names eight colors	92%
Recites the alphabet	71%
Recognizes capital letters	46%
Recognizes lowercase letters	33%
Likes to listen to stories	92%
Has experience with crayons	100%
Has experience with scissors	100%
Can read	8%

Of the 23 students, 100 percent had experience with crayons and scissors prior to attending school. At least 80 percent can print their name, name the eight colors, and like to listen to stories. Even though 71 percent of the students can recite the alphabet, less than 40 percent recognize the letters of the alphabet. Ninety-two percent of the students like to listen to stories, but only eight percent can read printed text. A further analysis of these data would seem to indicate that 91 percent of the parents perceive their child entering school with mastery of skills not related to printed material. Forty-three percent of the parents perceive their child entering school with mastery of skills relative to printed text.

When parents were asked how frequently they read to their child, four percent responded never, 18 percent read occasionally, 39 percent read frequently, and 39 percent read daily. These results indicate the majority (78 percent) of the students are read to on a regular basis, while 22 percent of the students are not read to regularly. Figure one presents these results in graph form.

Parents Reading to Children

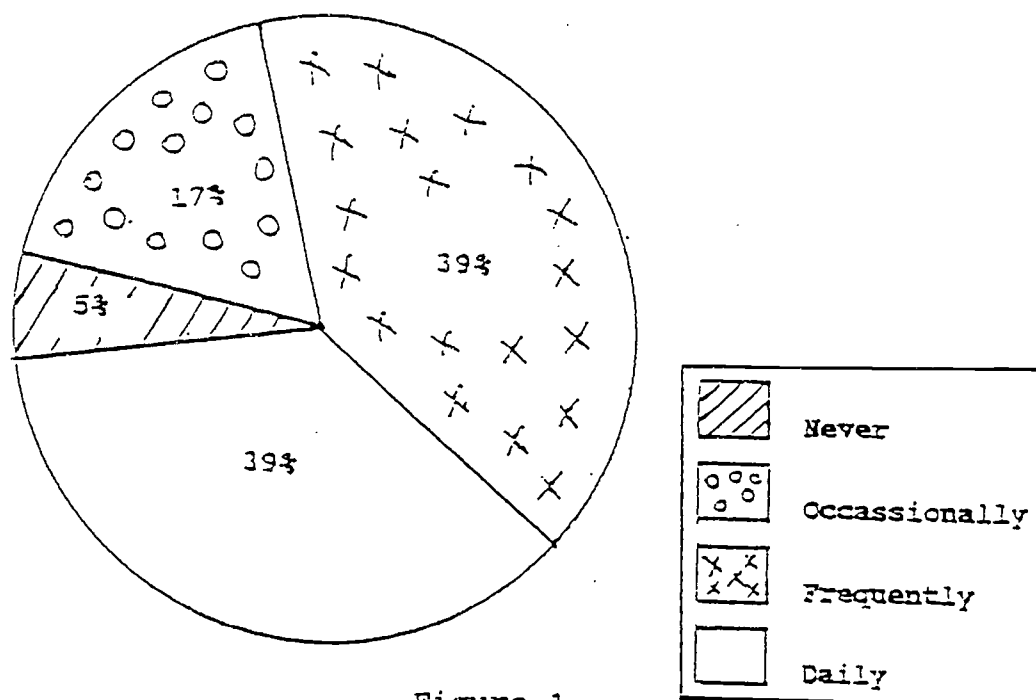


Figure 1

The researcher designed a survey for the kindergarten faculty at the targeted school to ascertain whether other kindergarten students were lacking in reading readiness skills (Appendix A). Three teachers

were surveyed with results representing five classrooms of kindergarten children. A summary of the skills and the percent of each class demonstrating the skill is presented in table three.

Table 3
Kindergarten Teacher Survey

Skill	Class A 24 Students	Class B 24 Students	Class C 25 Students	Class D 25 Students	Class E 25 Students
Recognizes eight colors	67%	71%	76%	80%	84%
Rhymes seven of ten words	38%	42%	44%	50%	56%
Manipulates 13 of 15 position words	63%	67%	80%	60%	84%
Recites the alphabet	42%	50%	16%	52%	52%
Writes their name	67%	46%	64%	48%	52%
Recognizes letters in their name	58%	33%	44%	64%	48%

Of the 123 students checked on skills, over 70 percent recognized the eight basic colors and could manipulate objects to show mastery of 13 of 15 position words (Appendix B). Fifty-five percent of the students could write their name. Less than 50 percent were able to auditorily rhyme seven out of 10 words (Appendix B), recite the alphabet, or recognize the letters in their name. This data indicates that of the 123 children surveyed 45 percent (55 students) lack four of the six reading readiness skills. The skills that had the greatest deficit were the ones related to alphabet letters.

The district checklist was administered to determine the base line entry level of readiness skills for the 24 targeted kindergarten students (Appendix B). A summary of skills and percent of students demonstrating these skills is presented in figure two.

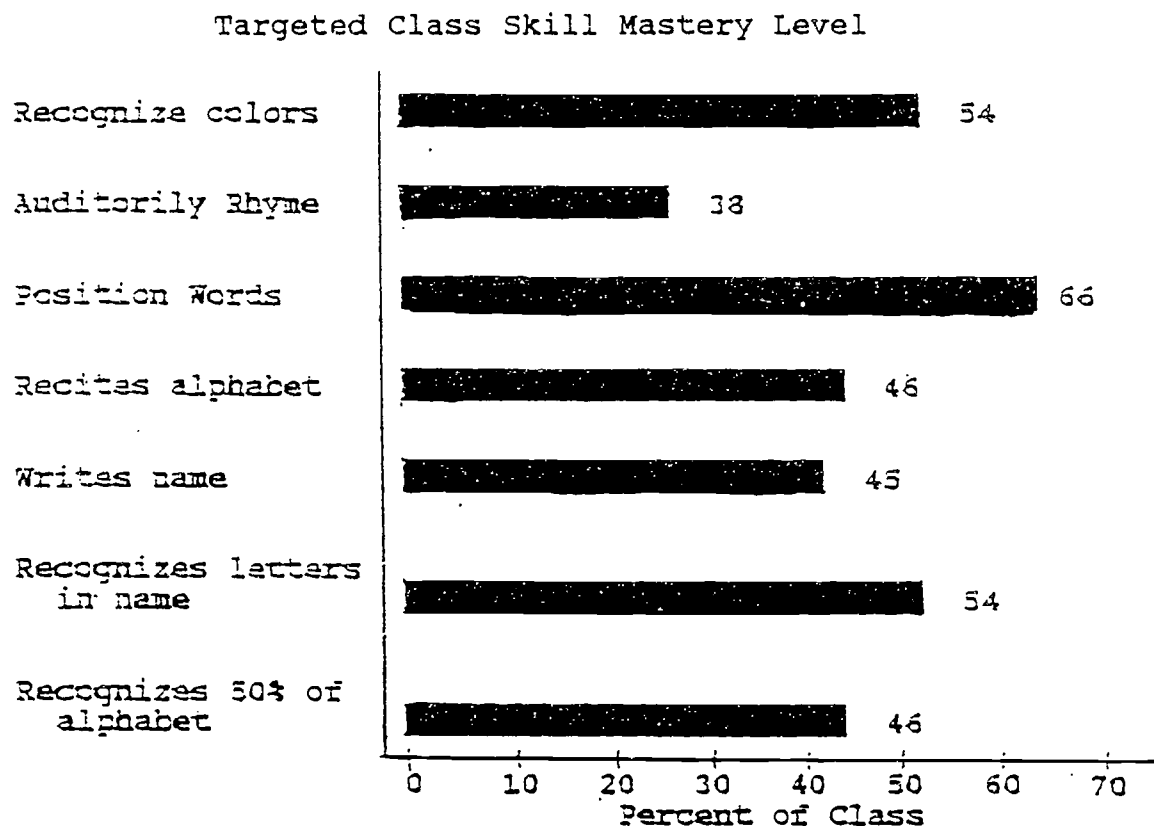


Figure 2

Over 50 percent of the students recognized the eight basic colors, used objects to manipulate position words, and identified the letters in their name. Less than 50 percent of the students could auditorily rhyme words, recite the alphabet, write their name, and recognize 50 percent of the alphabet. Analysis of these

data would indicate the majority of students lack readiness in four of the seven assessed skills. The majority of these skills are related to printed material. These data support the findings found in the parent survey and the survey of other kindergarten teachers.

Probable Cause

The literature suggests several underlying causes for lack of readiness in the school setting. The norm (the married-couple household, with father employed and mother at home caring for the children) is a disappearing pattern. Economic concerns are driving mothers to work many hours outside the home. The number of children being raised by unwed, divorced, or separated parents continues to rise. Households with children under 18 years of age now include foster parents, extended families, children living with other relatives, adoptive parents, or blended families (Edwards & Young, 1992). A review of enrollment data collected from the targeted school reveals 80 percent of the students live with both parents, and 20 percent live in other forms of family environments.

The families of children being educated in America's schools also include many immigrant families who do not speak or understand English. The 1980's saw the number of Asian and Hispanic immigrant children increase dramatically (U.S. Department of Education,

1994). These families have different views on schools, teaching, and their own roles in their children's education. In the targeted classroom 25 percent of the students have an Hispanic background as reported on enrollment data. This language barrier presents even more obstacles for the primary teacher to overcome in order to ease transition from the home to the classroom.

"One in every five children in the U.S. lives in a family whose income is below - often far below - the poverty level, that rate doubles among blacks and Latinos" (Edwards & Young, 1994, p.74). Greenburg (1989) felt that low-income families are often bogged down with struggling to obtain enough money to eat, cope with housing, transportation, and domestic problems. Ramey and Ramey (1994) further suggested that for this segment of the population educational toys, games, and books appear to be luxuries, and parents may not have the time, energy, or knowledge to find innovative or less-expensive ways to foster young children's development.

Burchby (1982) suggested that parents may want to help with education, but they are too busy caring for their other children, or they are at work, or they feel insecure about helping their child with school readiness skills. Many of them did not have great school experiences, and the insecurity about school still exists.

Even in families with above-average incomes, parents often lack the time and energy to invest in their child's preparation for school, and they sometimes face limited options for high-quality child care before children start school. Therefore, many kindergarten teachers throughout the country report children are arriving at school inadequately prepared (Ramey & Ramey, 1994). Based on survey information 40 percent of the targeted children have some prior educational experience before entering kindergarten.

Television has a crucial role to play in the national ready-to-read campaign as stated by Boyer (1993). In the United States we have 19 million preschoolers, and collectively, these children watch 14 billion hours of television every year. Much of what they view is quite disturbing. None of the major networks offer even a single hour of educational programming on a weekly basis. In 1993 Congress passed a "Ready to Learn Bill" that authorized funding for preschool television programming on public broadcasting stations. President Bush signed the bill but the funds have not been appropriated.

Computer software companies are developing beginning reading programs for the home market. At this time there is little information about the impact of computers on children's reading. Some packages will provide children with good experiences, while others are

nothing more than automated worksheets. Simply placing a child in front of a computer terminal with a reading software program will not teach them to read. Parents have to become actively involved with their child (National Institute of Education, 1985).

Gottschell (1995) stated that a familiar complaint of primary teachers is that children often arrive in kindergarten with little evidence of experience with books. They do not seem to look forward to reading, and they do not seem to know how books "work" and the pleasure books bring. Many children have not had the opportunity of visiting a library. Of the targeted students 63 percent have access to a library card as reported on the parent survey. In many cases if books are purchased for home use, they come from large grocery store chains and tend to be poorly written and badly illustrated.

The curriculum of most schools also creates a problem regarding readiness skills. According to Willer and Bredekamp (1990) children entering kindergarten are now expected to have already acquired readiness skills. These skills used to be taught during the kindergarten year. Freeman (1990) states that current research has indicated a trend toward a more structured, academic kindergarten because of state mandates and pressures from first grade teachers and parents. Readiness skills have been abandoned in order to accommodate this trend

toward the academic kindergarten. More kindergartens are adapting commercially prepared curricula that are extensions of textbook series used in early grades.

Kindergarten used to be the time for readiness. As a result of the change in curricula imposed by the school systems, more and more children are struggling and failing (Stipek, Rosenblatt, & DiRocco, 1994). The targeted school district has adapted a kindergarten curricula that mandates the use of a reading series that is commercially produced and requires benchmark mastery level for progressing to the next grade level.

A summary of probable causes for the problem gathered from the site and literature include the following:

1. dysfunctional families trying to survive on a day to day basis;
2. single parent homes, other small children at home, and two working parents;
3. non-English speaking students and parents;
4. parents having poor school experiences and feeling inadequate to help;
5. lack of high quality child care providers;
6. impact of television viewing;
7. lack of access to quality literature;
8. change in curricula demands of the kindergarten program.

Since children are not coming from homes where school preparedness is emphasized and because the kindergarten curriculas have become more academic, it seems that efforts must be made to put readiness skills back into the primary curriculum.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Analysis of probable cause data suggested students' lack of reading readiness skills could be attributed to a number of factors. The environmental background, including family makeup, language spoken, socioeconomic standards, and lack of previous educational experiences affect the readiness level of a child. The school curricula expectations further impact students' readiness level. The literature search for solution strategies was undertaken as suggested by the above probable cause data. Analysis of this data suggested that a teacher has little control over some causes and must work around them, and that other causes have solution strategies addressed in the literature. There seems to be several emerging concerns that merit further thought: (1) What methods of readiness instruction help children acquire reading skills? (2) What strategies could be used to meet the many individual students' needs? (3) How can a teacher help parents work with their child to acquire skills? (4) What resources are available in the school setting to encourage acquisition of skills?

A great deal of attention has been given to developmentally appropriate practices in kindergarten with regard to emergent literacy versus the traditional method of instruction. According to Strickland (1990), in the traditionally held method there needs to be an intense period of readiness instruction before reading instruction can begin. The "getting them ready" consists of direct instruction in learning letter names, letter-sound relationships, and a variety of visual-perceptual tasks. Learning to write must wait until reading is underway. Children are considered literate only after reading and writing resembles adult models. Strickland contrasts this with the emergent literacy curriculum that emphasizes the ongoing development of skill in reading and writing and stresses participation in literacy activities that are meaningful from the child's point of view.

Dailey (1992) contends that reading programs that teach children to read and write through the use of dittos and workbook pages reflect practices that are developmentally inappropriate for young children. She states that the child's needs are not taken into account when every child is doing the same thing at the same time. Another contention is writing in workbooks takes the focus away from the child and centers instead on the teacher. This prevents children from developing their own initiatives.

Smith (1989) suggests that we surround young children with books and storytelling rather than try to teach them a sequence of letters and high frequency words. He further suggests that handling books, letter recognition, simulated writing, or scribble writing is more important than working on shapes, color recognition, or hopping and skipping.

According to the National Institute of Education (1985) there should be ample experiences with oral and printed language, and early opportunities to begin writing. They state in the ideal program there should be a balanced formal and informal approach without causing undue pressure to the children.

Teachers need to incorporate shared reading experiences in their curriculum. Rasala (1989) urges teachers to utilize clapping, dancing, using different voices, and informal dramatic practices with these readings. Through the use of traditional stories, modern stories with a universal theme, and repetitive stories, skill work with sound recognition, rhyming, and sight word recognition can be achieved.

Children need to be allowed to experiment with writing. Walton (1989) contends that children need chances to write letters to friends, make lists, label pictures, and write stories, without being concerned about correct spelling. Group writing activities such as thank-you letters, stories about special events,

and letters home to parents, use teacher-child interaction to make writing meaningful.

Hayes (1990) suggested that by watching and listening to children as they write, teachers can observe children's progress in becoming writers. These observations can provide information for instruction that will be developmentally appropriate for each child. She further contends that a classroom environment rich in purposeful and meaningful print, and an enthusiastic teacher motivate children to become writers.

Franzen and Allington (1991) suggest that all young children, regardless of the diversity of experiences they bring to school, are ready to learn. Schools should neither reward nor penalize children for the parents they have. Instead, schools should encourage families to become involved in their child's education. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1994), when families are involved in the children's education in positive ways, "children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate positive attitudes and behavior, graduate at higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education." (p. 5) What parents do to help their children learn is more important than how well-off the family is. Parents benefit from becoming involved with their school's teaching/learning activities.

Lee Cantor (1991) urges teachers to get parental support as a means of shaping the success for children. By implementing a Back-to-School Night, teachers have an opportunity to meet parents, explain their policies and programs in detail, answer questions about their class, and assure parents about their commitment to their children. Canter further suggests the use of weekly classroom newsletters as a way of informing parents about classroom activities and upcoming events. He gave additional suggestions for involving parents in homework and using home-school contracts to keep parents abreast of specific problem areas.

Rasinski and Fredericks (1990) advise parents to read to their children. They state three reasons for reading aloud. First, reading to children is a relatively easy activity for both parents and children. The only elements needed are a book, a child, and some time. Second, reading aloud promotes growth in reading. Children who are read to by their parents are exposed to a wide vocabulary and they develop a sense of "story" by getting meaning from written symbols. Third, reading to children is an extremely enjoyable activity for both parent and child.

Floyd (1992), who has 17 years teaching at the primary level, designed a whole language approach that involved parents-as-partners in reading quality literature books. Children were given an opportunity to

take home a book bag for a week. The bag contained a book and an activity sheet to reinforce the book and its concepts. After a 10 week use of the program, 100 percent of the parent/child groups reported they enjoyed the program. Sixty-three percent felt the book selection was suitable and 89 percent felt the time factor was appropriate.

Spewock (1991) designed a unique way of helping parents help their children through learning packets. The packets contained information about child development - especially in language. Parents were encouraged to read and share experiences that build a positive attitude toward reading. They were reminded that learning is a sequence of acquired experiences and that each child learns at his/her own rate. The advantages of the learning packets were many: (1) they established positive lines of communication between parents and school, (2) the information was distributed to parents at the appropriate stage in their child's development, (3) they were convenient and helpful resources for parents who wanted to spend quality time with their child, (4) the packets were easy to read and easy to use, and (5) the packets made parents aware of the important role they played in the early education of their child.

At Gardner School, a large urban school in California, a program promoting a working partnership

with parents was implemented. The teachers encouraged parental presence in the school that permitted the students to enjoy the proximity and interaction with adults. Parents assisted and supported instruction in three ways: (1) as teaching partners, they could tutor students during and after school, (2) they could function as resources in the classroom by sharing personal experiences and perspectives, and (3) they could be at-home teachers by making everyday occurrences educational ones, too. This might include reading the mail together, talking about a shared book, or relating family memories (Flodd & Lapp, 1995).

Another method of improving early literacy is through cross-age interaction as explained by Leland and Fitzpatrick (1994). This program involved pairing kindergartners and sixth graders as reading buddies for weekly 45 minute sessions. The sixth graders were not expected to teach the younger children to read, but to make sure they both had fun while reading and writing together. Both tutor and tutee gained from interacting in cooperative groups, exhibiting positive attitudes, and achieving higher reading skills.

After further review of the literature, the researcher found that teachers who were successful in increasing reading skills were successful because they emphasized these skills. Teachers need to encourage parents to become actively involved in their child's

education through at-home reading activities as well as school participation. Teachers need administrative support to implement plans involving parents, other students, and curricula changes. Through active participation in meaningful activities and interaction with others, the possibilities are endless for helping children become successful readers.

Project Outcomes

The terminal objective of this problem intervention is related to the discrepancy data presented in Chapter 2. Results of the surveys and checklist evaluations indicated that students were lacking in reading readiness skills. The probable cause data from the literature indicated a need for additional methods to address this problem. Therefore:

As a result of changes in curricula content and delivery, as well as an increase in reading and writing activities during the period of September 1995 to November 1995, the kindergarten students from the targeted class will increase reading readiness skills as measured by teacher observation and district assessment tools.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Design materials and activities that involve parents in reading and writing skills.
2. Develop writing materials for readiness skills.
3. Develop activities for cross-age interaction with reading and writing skills.

4. Develop a classroom schedule to meet the needs of reading and writing activities.

Action Plan

The following action plan was designed to implement three major solution components: involving parents in increasing readiness skills, implementing writing activities in the classroom, and using sixth grade students in a cross-age reading program. The improvement sought as a result of the implementation plan is increased reading readiness skills in the kindergarten class.

The researcher will design and administer baseline surveys for the parents, kindergarten teachers, and students. (Appendix A) The surveys were written in the summer of 1995 and administered during the first week of school. The purpose of the baseline surveys was to compile data for probable cause.

The students will be assessed on entry level readiness skills using the district checklist during the first two weeks of school. (Appendix B) The purpose of using this checklist is to serve as a baseline to measure growth at the end of the implementation program.

The next five components of the implementation plan will address the issue of involving parents in increasing reading readiness skills. The researcher designed the materials (over the summer of 1995) to be utilized by the targeted students and their parents.

A classroom newsletter that includes activities of the past week and information about upcoming events will be sent home each Friday, starting the first week of school. The first newsletter will explain procedures and general information for the year. Thereafter, the researcher will use a one page summary newsletter each Friday. (Appendix C)

A parent-child reading activity program will be implemented, starting the second week of school. To introduce this program a letter will be sent to the parents. (Appendix D) The researcher created 30 book packs each containing a book, (Appendix E) three-prong folder, paper, and activity sheet (Appendix F) enclosed in a ziplock storage bag. An evaluation form will be included in each pack. (Appendix G) Each Friday the students will select a book pack to be completed at home within one week. A chart with library pockets will be used to keep track of books checked out. A chart with student's names listed will be used to record the number of book packs used by each child.

If a child and parent complete the book pack prior to the end of the week, a second selection can be made. For every five book packs completed by a parent-child team, the student will select a reward from the prize box. The prizes will include bookmarks, pencils, gum, markers, etc. This activity will be utilized for a ten week period.

Parent helpers will be encouraged to assist in the classroom on a regular basis. These parents are chosen based upon their responses to the parent survey given the first week of school. They will be given an opportunity to assist in the classroom for one and one-half hours each week.

Once the number of volunteers has been determined, a schedule will be established either weekly or biweekly. The volunteers will work individually or with small groups of two to four students. They will work on reading skills and writing activities.

In addition, the volunteers will assist the researcher in preparing activities to be used in the classroom. This volunteer program will be organized to start the third week of school.

Each Monday one child's name will be randomly selected to be the "Bear of the Week". This means that each day this child will be invited to bring special pictures, toys, or hobbies to share with the rest of the students. (Appendix H) On Friday, this child will take home a theme bag. The bag is a cloth totebag that contains a teddybear, book, bear memory game, cookie cutter, box of markers and pencils, and a three-prong folder with paper and instructions. The book chosen was Corduroy by Don Freeman, and the researcher designed the memory game using pairs of bear pictures. An activity sheet (Appendix I) will explain how the activities are

to be used. The child and parents will complete a "What if" page (Appendix J) and will also make a one-page summary (using pictures and words) of their weekend's activities. Parents will be asked to complete an evaluation of the activities. (Appendix K)

On Monday, when the bag is returned to school, the "What if" paper and summary page will be shared with the other students. Each child's picture will be taken holding the teddybear and placed in a class photo album with the two completed papers. This activity will start the third week of school.

Take-home bags containing a book, a learning center activity, and an evaluation form will be taken home by the students for overnight. The researcher made 28 cloth bags, each containing a book and a learning activity (The Learning Centers Club, Education Center in Greensboro N.C.). (Appendix L)

Prior to the start of this activity, parents "were asked" if they wanted to have their child participate in this project or not. If they said "yes" it was understood that they would help keep the bags in good condition. (Appendix M) A chart listing the students names will be used to record the bag checked out to each child. The students will have the take-home bags for one night as pieces must be counted before sending the bags with the other class. Parents will be asked to evaluate the contents of the bag. (Appendix N) As the

students master skills, the learning activities will be changed to meet the needs of the students. The take-home bag activities will begin the fourth week of school.

The next two components of the implementation plan will describe materials that were developed by the researcher over the summer of 1995 to promote writing activities in the classroom.

Writing logs will be utilized starting the first week of school. The researcher created an 18-page bound writing log for each student. The log has a cover (Appendix O) which will be colored by the student, 18 blank pages to be completed over an 18 week period, and a checklist to chart individual progress. (Appendix P) Students will write in the logs once a week on a topic of their choice at their independent writing level. The writings will be shared with classmates and the researcher. A 20-minute time was allotted at the beginning of the year, to be increased to 30 minutes when the researcher deemed necessary, for using the writing logs.

Class books will be constructed, with each book representing a different color. Each child will contribute a page for the book which will be identified by their attached photocopied picture. An adult will write what the child dictates for their page of the book. The book titles will be as follows:

The Red Wagon Book

Blue Box Book

Over in the Sunny Meadow Book

Green Creature Book

Orange Pumpkin Book

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Will You Wear?

Purple Cow Book

Black Spider Book

The class book activity will begin with the Red Wagon Book on the second week of school.

The last component of the implementation plan will be a cross-age reading program involving a sixth grade class and the targeted students. The program will begin the third week of school. The sixth grade teacher and researcher will meet and schedule an agreeable time and day each week for this program to occur in the kindergarten room. The teachers will set up the teams that will work together. The researcher will conduct a training session for the sixth graders to explain the program, guidelines, book selection, materials, and answer questions. (Appendix Q)

At the first session, the sixth graders will come to the kindergarten room to meet their reading buddy. The researcher will read a story to all the students. The next task will be for the group to create a T chart on the skill of working together. This chart will be posted in the room.

Next the students will find their reading buddy by matching puzzle pieces. The researcher has cut index cards into two pieces with capital letters on each piece. The kindergartner will have one piece and a sixth grader the other piece. The students that match will form the reading buddy team. The team will make nametags and get acquainted. This activity will take 30 minutes.

The remaining sessions will occur one each week in the kindergarten room for 20-30 minutes. The sixth grader will select a book to read to the kindergartner. A record of the books read will be kept on a chart in a pocket folder for each child. (Appendix R) After reading the book, the team will discuss the story using guide questions. (Appendix S) Some sessions will include picture and story writing which will be kept in the pocket folder. At the end of the implementation period, evaluations will be completed by both age groups. (Appendix T)

Method of Assessment

A variety of data collection methods were used to assess the affects of the intervention. Evaluations from parents were used to determine the effect of parent involvement programs. A checklist of writing levels evaluated the students' growth in writing. An evaluation by sixth graders and kindergartners determined the affect of the cross-age reading program.

The district checklist was readministered to show growth in reading readiness skills. Additional data, regarding students' growth in reading readiness was obtained through anecdotal records based on teacher observation.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase the reading readiness level of the kindergarten students. The use of reading and writing materials that involved parents, a classroom emphasis on writing, and cross-age interaction were selected to affect the desired change.

Five components of parental involvement were used to increase reading readiness skills. Each aspect of this component involved parents working with the children either at home or in the classroom setting.

A classroom newsletter was sent home each Friday starting the first week of the school year and continued throughout the intervention. The newsletters were designed to inform parents of the week's activities and upcoming events. Each newsletter gave suggestions to parents about how to reinforce skills and concepts presented during the week.

After the initial newsletter, which contained practices for the entire year, the remaining newsletters were one page in length. A sample newsletter can be found in Appendix C.

The parent-child book packs were started the second week of school. All of the students selected a book pack to take home on Friday. At the end of the first week the program was modified. The original plan had the selection of a second book pack any time prior to the end of the week. But the time needed to process the returned books necessitated a change. The researcher decided that only if a book pack were returned on Monday or Tuesday, could another selection be made.

A chart with students' names listed was used to record the number of book packs read to each child. For every five book packs completed and returned, the student selected a reward from the prize box. This activity was utilized for a ten week period.

The parent-helper program was implemented the third week of school and continued throughout the intervention period. From the responses to the parent survey given the first week of school, nine parents expressed a desire to assist in the classroom on a regular basis. A bi-weekly schedule was established with the volunteers assisting for one and one-half hours each week.

During the implementation period, one volunteer dropped from the program due to the birth of a child, but she plans to return in early 1996.

The volunteers worked individually with students and with small groups of three and four students. They worked on reading skills and writing activities. The

volunteers further assisted the researcher in preparing activities that were utilized in the classroom.

The "Bear of the Week" activities were started the third week of school. One child was randomly selected each week to bring special pictures, toys, or hobbies to share with the rest of the students. On Friday, a Polaroid camera was used to take the child's picture holding Mr. Ted Bear, and the theme bag was sent home for the weekend. The student and his/her family were to complete the activities in the theme bag and return it on Monday.

On Monday the "What if" paper and summary page from the theme bag were shared with the class. These pages, with the child's picture, were placed in a class photo album.

During the implementation period nine students were selected and participated in the theme bag activity. This program will continue for the duration of the school year, enabling every student to have the opportunity to participate in the activity.

The third week of the intervention period, parents "were asked" if they wanted to have their child participate in the take-home bag activity (Appendix M). Eighteen of the 23 students were initially involved in the activity. A new student joined the class the ninth week of the intervention period and became a participant.

The Monday of the fourth week, these students were given a take-home bag for one night. The bags were returned on Tuesday. There were two weeks when students did not take the bags home due to a school holiday and a party activity day. This take-home bag intervention will continue for the duration of the school year.

The next two components of the implementation plan were utilized to promote writing activities in the classroom.

Writing logs were used starting the first week of school. The students wrote in the logs once a week on a topic of their choice at their independent writing level. A 15-minute writing time was allotted at the beginning of the year and increased to a 25-minute writing time the tenth week of the intervention period. The writings were shared with classmates, parent volunteers, and the researcher.

Class books representing different colors were started during the second week of the intervention. Each child contributed a page to these books. The page was identified by an attached photocopied picture of the student.

For the "Red Wagon Book", each student was given a paper with a red wagon on it. The child was instructed to draw the following: himself pulling the wagon and three objects in the wagon. The students' stories were dictated to the researcher, who wrote them on each page.

Prior to making the "Blue Box Book", the researcher covered a small cardboard box with blue paper. For three consecutive days the researcher placed one object inside the box for the students to try to identify. To accomplish this task, the students were to ask questions which could only be answered "yes" or "no". When the object was correctly identified, it was revealed to the students.

To make the blue book, a lift-up blue flap box was attached to each page. Each student drew an object to go under the flap and the researcher labeled it. The student then gave two characteristics of the object which were phrased as questions. Upon reading the completed book the questions were read, guesses were made as to the identity of the object, and the objects were revealed by lifting the flap.

Before making "Over in the Sunny Meadow Book" for the color yellow, the researcher read Over in the Meadow by Oliver Wadsworth to the students. This book was also used during music class. To make the class book each student was given a page containing a large sun with his picture attached in the middle of the sun. The students made pictures of a mother animal with some babies in their meadow. The students dictated their stories to a parent volunteer who wrote them on each page of the book.

The creature of the "Green Creature Book" was made by using green tempera paint. A small amount of green paint was placed in the fold of a paper. The students rubbed the folded paper to spread the paint into a shape. After the paint dried, facial features were added with markers. The students used crayons to add other objects to their pictures. Students dictated stories to the researcher about what the creature looked like and was doing.

Orange construction paper pumpkins created the class "Orange Pumpkin Book". Using Q-tips and black tempera paint the students made facial features on the pumpkins to depict a feeling - sad, happy, scared, excited, or "icky". Stories dictated to a parent volunteer explained why the pumpkin had that feeling.

After reading Jesse Bear What Will You Wear? by Nancy White Caristrom the students made their book, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Will You Wear?" Using a bear stencil pattern, the students sponge painted a brown bear shape on construction paper. After the bear dried, the students used various colors of shirts and pants to dress their bears. Stories were dictated to the researcher telling where the bear would go dressed in this student selected outfit.

After learning the poem, "I Met a Purple Cow" by Jean Warren, the students made a "Purple Cow Book". Each student was given the head of a purple cow and

instructed to complete the body. Added to this drawing were a picture of themselves and items that illustrated where the cow and the child might go or what they might do together. Stories responding to "What would you do if you had a purple cow?" were dictated to the researcher.

The final color book was the "Black Spider Book". After the researcher read The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle, the students used crayons to make spider webs. With the aid of a parent volunteer and from numbers written on cards, the students randomly selected a number between one and ten. Using an inkpad and one finger, the student fingerprinted as many spiders as the number selected. Black markers added legs to the spiders. The researcher wrote a sentence on each page indicating the number of spiders made by each student.

The last component of the implementation plan was a cross-age reading program involving a sixth grade class and the targeted students. The sixth grade teacher and researcher met the second week of school to set up the reading teams and a weekly schedule for the activity. This same week the researcher conducted a training session for the sixth graders. Guidelines as to book selection, materials needed, and the expectations of these older students were explained. Questions from these students were also answered.

At the first session the researcher read a big book, Goldilocks and the Three Bears by David Theall, to both the kindergartners and the sixth graders. Together the group created a T-chart on working together which was posted in the room

The kindergartners found their sixth grade reading buddy by matching puzzle pieces containing letters of the alphabet. The students made nametags and got acquainted.

During the remaining sessions of the intervention period, the sixth graders read to the kindergartners for 25 minutes one day each week. After reading and discussing the book, the students made pictures related to the story to keep in their folders.

Beginning with the seventh week of this implementation period, the researcher provided more specific activities for pictures and story writing. Examples included sequencing activities, identifying favorite parts of the story, and identifying main characters. The teams worked together to create the illustrations with the sixth graders recording the dictated stories.

The reading buddy activity will continue for the remainder of the school year.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

During the last two weeks of the intervention period, evaluations were administered to the parents,

targeted students, and sixth graders to assess the effect of the implementation plan. The district checklist was re-administered to assess the effect of the implementation in regard to readiness skills.

In order to assess the parental involvement aspect of the implementation, three parts of the program were evaluated.

Parents were given an opportunity to respond to a survey regarding the use of the parent-child reading packs at the end of the ten week period (Appendix G). Of the 25 students in the class, 22 participated in the program. Of the 22 parents asked to fill out the survey, 17 responded. One hundred percent of the parents felt the program had been an enjoyable experience for their child. Regarding the selection of books for this program, 100 percent felt they were suitable. Ninety-four percent felt the time factor of one week to complete the activities each week was "just about right".

Parents were asked to select the part of the program they liked best. Twelve percent liked doing the "mystery" book search question, 12 percent liked reading the books together, and 76 percent liked all of it.

When introducing the parent-child program to the parents, the researcher had set a goal of ten books to be read over the ten week period for each student. Data from the classroom chart, where a record was kept for

the number of books read, indicates 83 percent of the class reached the goal of using ten book packs.

Each week when the take home bags were used, an evaluation was included to be completed after utilizing the activities (Appendix N). A summary of these evaluations is presented in table four.

Table 4
Take Home Bag Evaluations

Observation	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Bag was used	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	94%	100%
Child enjoyed book	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%	94%	100%
Child enjoyed activity	100%	94%	100%	100%	100%	94%	88%
Directions easy to follow	88%	88%	93%	100%	100%	94%	94%
Activity was easy	59%	65%	79%	93%	78%	41%	67%
Activity was average	35%	29%	14%	7%	22%	53%	33%
Activity was hard	6%	6%	7%	0%	0%	6%	0%

These data would seem to indicate that in over 94 percent of the time, the bags were utilized by the child. It would further indicate that in over 88 percent of the time, the directions were easy to follow, and the child enjoyed the book and activity in the bag. Over 88 percent of the activities were easy or average for the student to complete.

Each week when the theme bag was sent home, an evaluation was included with the activities (Appendix K). During the intervention period, nine students participated in the theme bag and 100 percent of the families responded to the evaluation. All of the

students wrote a story explaining what the bear did at their home over the weekend. One hundred percent of the families reported they enjoyed the "family togetherness" time with some or all of the family members participating in the activities.

When the families were asked what they liked best about the bag, five responded the game, one the book, two the different activities, and one the stuffed bear. When asked which of the activities they liked least, one family reported the book, while the other eight families indicated "nothing". Many comments were included such as: "What a great confidence builder for Erika." "This is a great way to make the kids feel special." "It's been nice to spend the time together." "This was fun."

To evaluate the effect of the writing component of the intervention plan, a checklist was included with the writing logs (Appendix P). The first week of the intervention period, the researcher recorded on each child's checklist their independent writing level. Biweekly the researcher would use the checklist to record progress noted. A summary of the writing levels at the beginning and end of the intervention is presented in table five.

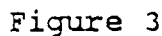
Table 5
Writing Log Checklist

Level	August 1995	November 1995
Pictures only	56%	0%
Scribbles	4%	8%
Random letters	32%	64%
Repeated letters	8%	20%
Initial consonants for words	0%	8%

These data would indicate that in August the majority of the students used pictures or scribbles as symbols for the written word. It would further indicate 40 percent of the students had knowledge of using letters to represent the written text.

At the end of the intervention, eight percent of the students were using pictures or scribbles for written text. Ninety-two percent of the class used letters in some arrangement to represent the written text used in the writing logs.

At the end of the intervention period, the 25 students were given five minutes to write a list of words. Figure three represents these results in graph form.



The kindergartners and the sixth graders were given an opportunity to evaluate the cross-age reading buddy program (Appendix T). Because the kindergartners could not read the evaluation, a parent volunteer read the questions to the students and recorded their responses. Twenty-five kindergartners and 26 sixth graders evaluated the program. The results of the affirmative responses for each group are represented in table six.

Table 6
Cross Age Reading Program

Question	Kindergarten Responses	Sixth Grade Responses
Enjoy reading together	100%	92%
Like drawing/writing	90%	81%
Continue the program	95%	96%

Data from this table indicate 96 percent of both groups enjoy the reading time spent together and want to continue this program. Eighty-six percent of the total group like the drawing/writing activities that were completed after reading the book selection.

The sixth grade teacher, whose students are involved in the cross-age reading program, was interviewed. She feels the sixth graders derive just as much benefit from the program, if not more, than the kindergartners. The students develop meaningful relationships with one another and value the time together. The older students have their own self-worth validated and their confidence in their personal reading effort is greatly increased.

The district checklist was administered to determine the effect of the intervention on readiness skills (Appendix B). Twenty-five students were assessed. A summary of skills and percent of students

demonstrating these skills in September and November is presented in figure four.

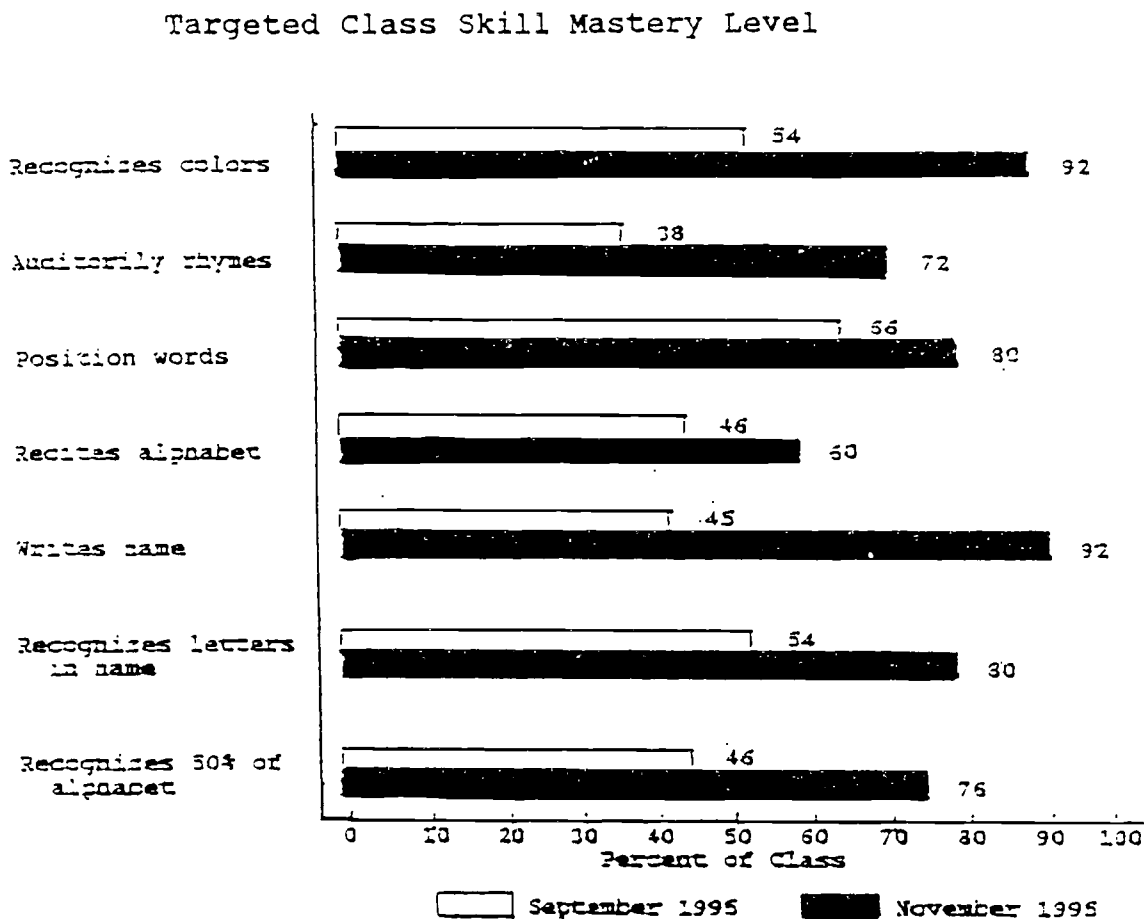


Figure 4

Analysis of these data indicate all skills have a gain in student mastery level with the overall average being 29 percent. There was a 47 percent increase in the number of students who could write their name. Over 25 percent of the students increased mastery in recognizing colors, auditorily rhyming, recognizing letters in their name, and recognizing alphabet letters.

Fourteen percent of the students increased their ability to recite the alphabet and use position words.

Further analysis would indicate that over 60 percent of the targeted students demonstrate mastery of all the readiness skills. Over 75 percent of the students have mastery of five of the seven skills. Prior experience indicates the targeted students have acquired mastery of more readiness skills at this time of the year than previous classes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on the district checklist, the targeted students showed a marked improvement in mastering reading readiness skills. The involvement of parent volunteers in the classroom provided individual assistance to students in acquiring skills. By using materials that were sent home, parents had an active role in helping their child acquire readiness skills. A total of 450 books were read during the parent-child reading time. The students and parents used 136 activities to reinforce readiness skills.

Writing skills were improved through the weekly writing logs. The students increased their ability to associate letters to the written symbols for words. The number of words the students could write increased.

The cross-age reading program provided for interaction of two age groups with both groups

benefitting. The time on task and interaction of the groups was evident by the students being self directed to complete the activities without teacher involvement.

The action plan, which consisted of eight components, required a great deal of preparation prior to implementation. Over the summer, I had prepared the materials for the book packs, take-home bags, theme bag, writing logs, and folders for the cross-age reading program. This preplanning and preparation allowed for ease in using the activities with the students.

Based on the experiences with my kindergarten students, I would offer the following recommendations for replicating my action plan.

Elicit the assistance of parent volunteers based on a personal comfort level of having parents assist in the classroom. In my classroom, the majority of the volunteer's time was spent working individually with the students. A minimal amount of time was spend constructing materials to assist with instruction.

The weekly newsletter should be sent home the same day each week so parents know when to expect it's arrival. Keep the newsletter one page in length as I found parents were more apt to read it.

When selecting the books for the parent-child reading packs, choose a variety of quality literature from well-known authors. After the students return the book packs, read and comment with the child on the

pictures added to each pack and about the book. By commenting on their work, the students knew of my interest in the completed task.

Using activities that are relatively easy when starting the take-home bags allows for positive feelings related to task accomplishment. As the students acquire more skills, change the activities to keep pace with their abilities. The materials I used from the Education Center were easily assembled and addressed various ability levels. When the bags are returned, count all the pieces of the activity to check for misplaced items prior to sending the bags home again with the students. Parent volunteers can assist in accomplishing this task.

Materials for the theme bag could include colored pencils and washable markers for the writing/drawing projects. Buy an inexpensive stuffed animal that can be easily replaced if damaged. Allowing the students to use the bag over a weekend gave time for the working parents to participate in the activities.

I used the writing logs on a weekly basis on various days of the week depending on my daily schedule. Prior to writing, the students offered suggestions for writing ideas, but were able to select their own topic when writing. I always had the students share their stories with an adult and at least one peer.

At the end of the year the class color books will be taken apart with each child receiving their contributed pages. By using attached photocopied pictures, the students could easily identify their individual page from the class book. I bound each book as it was completed.

The cross-age reading program can be successful if the sixth graders are trained in their role in the program. I had the same cross-age pairs working together for the entire intervention and on the same day each week. I changed the selection of books every five weeks.

Even with the short intervention period, I feel all of the components helped the targeted students improve reading readiness skills. By directly involving parents in working with their child through reading and activities, by using writing materials in the classroom, and cross-age reading by sixth graders, the kindergarten students were exposed to a variety of methods to increase readiness skills.

The parent-child book packs and the class color books were completed during the intervention period. The remaining components of my action plan will continue for the duration of the year in my kindergarten class.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Surveys

Dear Kindergarten Teachers,

I am currently conducting an action research project as a student at St. Xavier University. I would appreciate your responses to the following questions and your participation is voluntary.

How many of your students exhibit the following readiness skills?

1. Recognize the eight basic colors. _____
2. Auditorily rhymes seven out of 10 words. _____
3. Use objects to manipulate 13 of 15 position words.

4. Recites the alphabet. _____
5. Can write their name. _____
6. Recognize the letters in their name. _____

TEACHER OBSERVATION OF WRITING AND BOOK USAGE

1. List of words student independently writes in five minutes.

2. Children are given a picture book and the following behaviors are observed:

A. Child holds book right side up.	yes	no
B. Goes through the book from left to right.	yes	no
C. Looks at pictures.	yes	no
D. Makes comments.	yes	no
E. Points to printed text.	yes	no

Other observations:

SURVEY FOR KINDERGARTEN PARENTS

Dear Parents,

I am currently conducting an action research project as a student at St. Xavier University. I would appreciate your responses to the questions below. Your responses will be held in confidence and your participation is voluntary.

Return this form as soon as possible.

Child's name that you want him/her called at school

Birthday _____

1. Has your child had preschool or play-group experience?

_____ Name of school. _____

2. Does your child have any difficulties with speech?

3. Does your child have any special interests? _____

4. Check the skills your child has acquired:

_____ Knows address

_____ Knows phone number

_____ Knows birthday

_____ Can say full name

_____ Can say parents' full names

_____ Can print first name

_____ Counts to _____(how far?)

_____ Knows the names of colors (red, blue, green, yellow, brown, orange, purple, black)

_____ Can recognize numbers to 10

- _____ Recites the alphabet
_____ Recognizes capital letters
_____ Recognizes lowercase letters
_____ Likes to listen to stories
_____ Can tie shoes
_____ Can button own clothing
_____ Can zip own clothing
_____ Has experience with crayons
_____right handed _____left handed
_____ Has experience with scissors
_____right handed _____left handed

5. Is your child reading?_____ If so, how did he/she learn and how long have they been reading? _____
6. How frequently do you read to your child?
Never Occasionally Frequently Daily
7. Do you have a library card from a public library? _____
8. Would you be interested in helping one day each week for 1 1/2 hours in the classroom? Yes No If so, which day of the week is best for you? _____
9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your child? _____

This will be an exciting year! I look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Thank You!

Mrs. Dashner

Appendix 3

69

Name _____

Print numerals to 10:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

J	E	M	A	K	G	R	C	F	N
W	L	B	I	O	Z	P	S	Q	T
Y	V	X	U	H	D				1 of Capitals Recognized _____

f	k	m	i	d	l	c	g	s	j
e	v	d	q	t	h	u	p	x	o
y	n	r	h	w	z				1 of lower case letters Recognized _____

• make check mark in square if they know the letter.

RYME

rake/rain	rake/snake	rake/pail
phone/cone	phone/frog	phone/nose
key/shell	key/three	key/legs
lock/horn	lock/cook	lock/clock
shell/bell	shell/kite	shell/duck
pail/rain	pail/snail	pail/meat
fish/tire	fish/carrot	fish/dish
kite/light	kite/tie	kite/frog
duck/horn	duck/truck	duck/nose
tie/rain	tie/man	tie/pie

legs/tire	legs/chair	legs/eggs
tire/parrot	tire/tire	tire/rain
horn/kite	horn/snail	horn/corn
frog/log	frog/lock	frog/cook
nose/cone	nose/rose	nose/frog
moose/cook	moose/moon	moose/goose
whale/tale	whale/shell	whale/rain
box/three	box/fox	box/horn
cook/horn	cook/tire	cook/book
man/fan	man/nose	man/rain

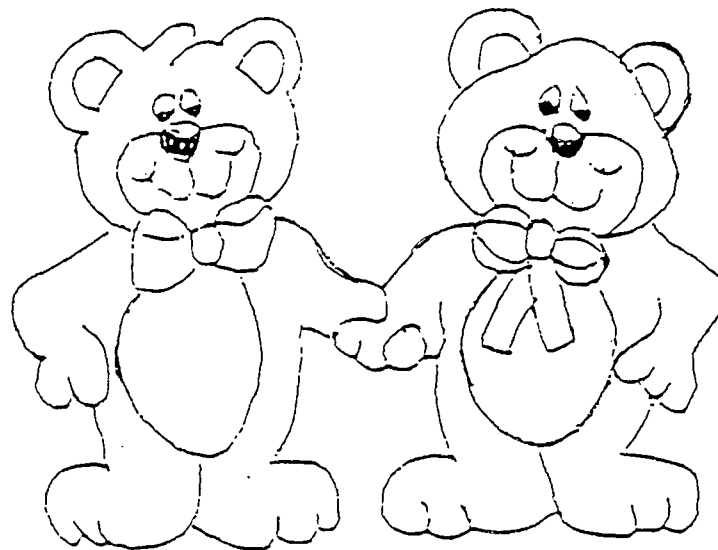
meat/cone	meat/frog	meat/feet
moon/spoon	moon/pail	moon/horn
wheel/frog	wheel/seal	wheel/tire
pants/meat	pants/rain	pants/ants
bears/chairs	bears/cook	bears/rain
shirt/rain	shirt/skirt	shirt/man
vest/pant	vest/moon	vest/nest
carrot/parrot	carrot/moose	carrot/horn
rain/three	rain/train	rain/fox
four/door	four/cake	four/bug

POSITIONAL WORDS

first				
last				
front				
back				
over				
under				
top				
middle				
bottom				
on				
off				
inside				
outside				
before				
after				

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix C
Classroom Newsletter



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Kindergarten at Washington School. I am looking forward to an exciting year with your child and I'm as anxious to get started as I'm sure you and your kindergartner are.

The following is a list of things your child should have brought to school.

1. 8 count large and small crayons.
2. Glue
3. One box of kleenex.
4. Pencils
5. A school box.
6. A school backpack or totebag. This should come to school each day with your child.

I have returned the paint shirts as I have a large selection from previous years.

Please write your child's name on everything that comes to school. This should include jackets, mittens, and boots.

General Information:

Transportation Changes - If at any time your child's transportation from school changes; being picked up, walking home, etc... please SEND A NOTE. You must notify the office

if your child is being picked up before dismissal times. If your child does not take a bus to school, please send me a note telling me how your child is to get home from school.

Attendance - Regular attendance is encouraged except when your child is ill. When your child is ill, please call the school at 544-3124 and leave a message regarding your child's illness. You will also need to send a note when your child returns to school. Any contagious disease (lice, strep, etc.) must be reported as soon as possible.

Conferences - There will be one conference with me to evaluate your child's progress. This conference period is held over two days in the district in November. During these days, your child does not attend school, and you are scheduled a time (usually 15 minutes) in which to speak with me. Dates and times will be given to you well in advance so to accommodate your work times and schedule. If at any time you or I have any concerns before or after conferences, contact by phone, or additional conferences can be made as well.

Birthdays - Your child may want to bring a birthday treat for the rest of the class on his/her birthday. Please notify me a day or two in advance. This treat may be something homemade or purchased at a store. If your child's birthday falls on a weekend, please let me know if you want to celebrate it on a Friday or a Monday. If your child has a summer birthday, you and your child can pick a day during the school year to celebrate their birthday. If you wish us not to celebrate your child's birthday, you must let me know.

Sharing - Your child will be able to share items with the class in a few weeks. Four or five children will be assigned each day. A note will be sent when this will begin. Also in a few weeks, we will be starting the "Bear of the Week". Each week one child is randomly selected to be able to share picture, hobbies, favorite toys, etc. for a week. When your child is selected a note will come home with more information. Each child will be the "Bear of the Week" once during the year.

Newsletters - A newsletter will be coming home every Friday, except for 2 or 3 day weeks. The newsletter will be kept to one page. The newsletter will have activities of the week, reminders, special events, and important dates coming up. Besides a newsletter, the children will be bring home a Washington School newsletter the third Friday of the month.

Parties - We will be having three parties: Halloween, Christmas, and Valentines. Some mothers will be contacting you about items to be donated. We will also be preparing and

eating a Thanksgiving dinner in November. More information will be sent on this.

Field Trips - We are hoping to schedule a couple of field trips this year. Information will be sent out to you regarding dates and times of these field trips.

Volunteers - I will be using classroom volunteers this year. Anyone who would like to be a classroom volunteer, please let me know by note the day most convenient for you. Volunteers are needed for 1 1/2 hours a day. The times are usually 9:30 to 11:00 or 1:15 to 2:45. This is usually weekly or biweekly depending on the number of volunteers.

I look forward to getting to know you and your child this year. Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dashner

MRS. DASHNER'S

COR

N

E

R

The yellow has sure brightened up our classroom this week. We made yellow books for Over in the Meadow.

In reading we reviewed the letters A a and B b. I have checked your child on these letters on the attached sheet. If your child did not get them right please have them practice at home. We started to work on the sound the letter C makes.

In math new materials introduced were geoboards, wooden cubes, and mirrors. The children are working on sorting objects by various categories. Each day we count the number of days we have been in school. Your child should be able to rote count to 19.

With the start of fall, the children are working on songs, poems, and art projects related to the season.

On Thursday we will be going to the Apple Orchard right after the children arrive at school. We will be going rain or shine, so have your child dress accordingly. Girls please no dresses. Due to our trip I'm asking the children who are assigned Thursday as their sharing day to NOT bring an item on the 28th only. Have your child share the things they see and do at the orchard.

Wanted If you have any diaper pins that you will no longer be using, I could use them to attach name tags when we go on field trips.

We have started our Second Step activities. This is a violence prevention program. Please see the attached note regarding this program.

Every Wednesday a class of sixth grade students comes to our room to be "Reading Buddies" with us. The sixth grader selects a book to read with their kindergarten buddy. The children enjoy this one on one book sharing.

REMINDERS:

1. Open House is on Thursday, October 5 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
2. Return the Parent-Child book packs by no later than Friday.

Mrs. Dashner

Appendix D

Parent-Child Letter

Dear Parents,

According to the United States Department of Education, "Children's success in school can be linked to reading to children and listening to them read. The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children."

I agree with this statement and will endeavor this year to read many books to your child. I would also encourage you to read daily to your child.

To assist with some additional reading materials in your home, I am starting a Parent Child Reading Program which will occur for the next ten weeks. Each Friday your child will be able to select a book to bring home. In addition to the book there will be a pocket folder, a guide sheet, and an evaluation form. Your child will have one week to return this pack of materials. If you and your child complete the activity before the week is up and return the packet, your child will be able to select another book pack. In the ten week period, for every five book packs that are completed by you and your child, your child will be able to select a prize from our prize pail. I hope every child will be able to use at least 10 of the book packs.

I hope you and your child will enjoy the books and time spent together reading and doing the activities.

Happy Reading!!!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dashner

Appendix E

PARENT-CHILD BOOK LIST

- Allard, Harry & James Marshall. 1977. Miss Nelson is Missing. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Berenstain, Stan & Jan. 1983. The Berenstain Bears and the Messy Room. Random House.
- Berenstain, Stan & Jan. 1984. The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV. Random House.
- Bourgeois, Paulette & Brenda Clark. 1995. Franklin Wants A Pet. Scholastic Inc.
- Bridwell, Norman. 1995. Clifford and the Big Storm. Scholastic Inc.
- Bridwell, Norman. 1972. Clifford the Small Red Puppy. Scholastic Inc.
- Brown, Margaret Wise. 1947. Goodnight Moon. Scholastic Inc.
- Cole Joanna. 1981. The Clown-Arounds. Parents Magazine Press.
- Conrad, Pam. 1989. The Tub People. Scholastic Inc.
- Craig, M. Jean. 1968. The Three Wishes. Scholastic Inc.
- Cutts, David. 1979. The House that Jack Built. Troll Associates.
- Graham, Margaret Bloy. 1967. Be Nice to Spiders. Harper & Row.
- Holl, Adelaide. 1969. One Kitten For Kim. Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Kalan, Robert. 1981. Jump, Frog, Jump! William Morrow & Co. Inc.
- Kelley, True. 1982. Buggly Bear's Hiccup Cure. Parents Magazine Press.
- Manushikin, Fran. 1986. Little Rabbit's Baby Brother. Scholastic Inc.

- Mayer, Mercer. 1985. Just Me and My Puppy. Western Publishing Co.
- Noble, Trinkia Hakes. 1980. The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash. Pied Piper Printing.
- Preston, Edna. 1978. Where Did My Mother Go? Scholastic Inc.
- Rey's, Margret & H. A. 1985. Curious George At the Fire Station. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Seuss, Dr. 1978. I Can Read with My Eyes Shut. Random House, Inc.
- Slobodkina, Esphyr. 1968. Caps For Sale. Harper Collins.
- Small, David. 1985. Imogene's Antlers. Crown Publishing Inc.
- Stone, Rosetta. 1975. Because a Little Bug Went Ka-Choo! Random House Inc.
- Thayer, Jane. 1982. Gus Goes To School. William Morrow & Co.
- Viorst, Judith. 1972. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Waber, Bernard. 1969. Lovable Lyle. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Wahl, Jan. 1987. Humphrey's Bear. Henry Holt & Co.
- Wiseman, Bernard. 1978. Morris Has A Cold. Scholastic Inc.
- Zion, Gene. 1956. Harry the Dirty Dog. Harper & Row.

Appendix F

PARENT CHILD READING ACTIVITY

Book: _____

Author: _____

Directions for using this book.

1. Read this book at least 2 times.

First time - for enjoyment and to get the meaning of the story.

Second time - to look for answers to the questions, pictures, and ideas for drawing.

2. Oral language discussion.
(2 questions that are significant for the book.)

3. "Mystery" Book Search Question.

Can you find _____ (a picture that is in the book).

4. Written (Drawing) Assignment. Parents may add a written explanation of the picture at the bottom of the child's picture. This can be a sentence your child dictates to you. Please print fairly large for easy reading. Then put the picture in the folder for others to see and enjoy.

Draw: Your favorite part of the story.

or

(Directions are given for something to draw relevant to the story.

5. Read and enjoy the other responses.
6. Parents - please fill out and return the response form to this book.

Thank you for your help.

Appendix G

PARENT RESPONSE FORM

Name of Book _____

1. Did your child enjoy this book?

Yes

No

Somewhat

2. Were the activities easy to complete?

Yes

No

Somewhat

3. Which part of the activities did you/your child like the best?

- _____ Reading the book together.
_____ Discussing the book together.
_____ Doing the "mystery" book search question.
_____ Drawing and writing about the book.
_____ Reading the other responses.
_____ All of them.

4. In my opinion, I feel this was a good/poor book, because:

(Parent Signature)

SURVEY ON PARENT CHILD READING PACKS

1. Did both you and your child enjoy the reading program?

Yes

No

Somewhat

2. Did you feel that the selection of books was suitable for this program?

Yes

No

Somewhat

3. Did you feel that the program took too much/too little time for you and your child to complete on a weekly basis?

Too much time

Just about right

Could be longer

4. Which part of the program did you/your child like the best? Choose only one.

_____ Reading the books together.

_____ Discussing the books together.

_____ Doing the "mystery" book search question.

_____ Drawing and writing responses for the folder.

_____ Reading the responses of the other students.

_____ All of it!!!

5. Additional comments:

Appendix H
"Bear of the Week" Letter

Dear Parents,

Congratulations! _____ has
been selected to be the 'Bear of the Week'.

Each week one child is picked to be the person
the class will get to know a little more about. Each
day, Tuesday through Friday, your child should bring
in something to help us get to know more about
him/her. Some suggestions are: pictures of the
family, pictures of your house, favorite toy, pictures
of your pet, etc. If your child takes dance lessons
or some other lessons they may want to share this
talent with us. Anything you can think of that would
be of interest to the rest of the class can be
shared.

We are enjoying getting to know each other a
little better.

Thank you for your help in making your child the
'Bear of the Week'.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Dashner

Appendix I
Theme Bag Activity Sheet

Mr. Ted Bear Bag

I hope you will enjoy this bag of fun. Please enjoy the book, game, song, What if.... sheet, and stuffed bear. On the blank paper provided write about Mr. Ted Bear's visit to your house. Return Mr. Bear and the contents of the bag to school on Monday.

Activities:

1. Sing this song: (Sing to tune A-Hunting We Will Go)

Oh, A-hunting we will go
A-hunting we will go
We'll catch a bear and put him in a chair,
A-hunting we will go.
Oh, A-hunting we will go
A-hunting we will go
We'll catch a cub and put him in a tub,
A-hunting we will go.
2. Try Bear Sandwiches
Make your child's favorite sandwich (peanut butter, tuna, jelly, etc.) and then cut the sandwich with the bear cookie cutter. It makes a ROARING good lunch.
3. Play the enclosed bear game.
4. Read the book in the bag.
5. Write a story. Write a one page summary on the blank paper provided about Mr. Bear's visit to your house. Use the markers provided to draw a picture and write your story. Describe such things as:
 - * Where did he sleep?
 - * What trips did he take with you?
 - * What stories did you read to him?
 - * What did he watch on TV?
6. Write on the "What if..." paper.
 - * Parents fill out the evaluation form.

Thank You!!!

Contents of this bag:

* bear * book * What if paper * blank paper * cookie
cutter * game * markers * parent evaluation

Appendix J
What If? Page

What if?

(Record your child's
responses.)

What would happen if a bear was in your bathtub?

What would happen if a bear wanted to sleep in your garage?

What would you do if you saw a bear looking into your
window?

What would you feed a bear if he was hungry?

What would you do if Mr. Bear was left out in the rain?

What would you do if you lived in a cave?

Appendix K

Parent Evaluation of Family Theme-Bag Activities

You have been given the opportunity to experience our theme bag in connection with our "Bear of the Week" program. Please help me by evaluating this type of family involvement in my program. Return this form with the bag of activities.

1. Check () the activities you participated in.

☐ song
☐ sandwich making
☐ game
☐ book reading
☐ What if...? paper
2. We wrote a story to return to school. Yes ____ No ____
3. My child and I enjoyed the "family togetherness" this bag generated? Yes ____ No ____
4. How many family members participated in the activities in the bag? Some ____ All ____ None ____
5. What did you like best about this bag?
6. What did you like least about this bag?
7. How can I improve the bag's contents?
8. Any additional comments.

Appendix L

Take Home Bag Activities

TAKE HOME BAGS

The following list includes the name of the learning activity, skill, and title of book including author, year, and publishing company in each of the bags. The learning activities are available from The Learning Centers Club, Education Center, Inc.

- #1 Firefighter Freddy
(Patterning with geometric shapes)
Asch, Frank. 1980. The Last Puppy. Simon & Schuster Inc.
- #2 Pig-Trough Treats
(Measurement - nonstandard units)
Low, Alice. 1993. The Popcorn Shop. Scholastic Inc.
- #3 Amanda Panda's Party
(Colors)
Kraus, Robert. 1983. Wise Old Owl's Canoe Trip Adventure. Troll Associates.
- #4 In the Doghouse
(Size Seriation - small, medium, large)
Bourgeois, Paulette. 1987. Big Sarah's Little Boots. Scholastic Inc.
- #5 Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
(Sequencing Pictures)
Smith, Judith & Parkes, Brenda. 1989. The Three Billy Goats Gruff. Rigby.
- #6 Pet Pals!
(Tangrams)
Rees, Mary. 1991. Ten In a Bed. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- #7 Kiddie Crossing
(Numbers 1-10 making sets)
Gilman, Phoebe. 1992. Something From Nothing. Scholastic, Inc.
- #8 Big Wheel Mobile
(Sorting geometric shapes)
Carle, Eric. 1991. Do You Want to Be My Friend? Houghton Mifflin Co.

- #9 Flowers and Showers
(Opposites)
Lionni, Leo. 1992. A Busy Year. Scholastic, Inc.
- #10 Mermaid Match
(Sequencing)
Cossi, Olga. 1989. Gus the Bus. Scholastic, Inc.
- #11 Fancy Fruitcake
(Patterning)
Sage, Angie. 1991. Monkeys in the Jungle. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- #12 Prehistoric Pals
(Up/down concept)
Leonard, Marcia. 1990. Alphabet Bandits. Troll Associates.
- #13 Betty's Birthday Bike
(Opposites)
Weiss, Nicki. 1991. Where Does the Brown Bear Go? Houghton Mifflin Co.
- #14 Toucans Can Talk Too!
(Sequencing)
Domanska, Janina. 1991. Little Red Hen. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- #15 Stegosaurus Stew
(Spelling)
Michaels, Ski. 1986. The Big Surprise. Troll Associates.
- #16 Space Shuttle Shipment
(Classification)
Hayes, Sarah. 1991. This Is The Bear & the Picnic Lunch. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- #17 Special Delivery
(Rhyming Pictures)
Inkpen, Mick. 1991. If I Had a Sheep. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- #18 All Aboard the Bow-Wow Boat
(Matching sets to numbers)
Baker, Keith. 1990. Who Is The Beast? Harcourt Brace Co.
- #19 A Panda Pillow
(Tangrams)
Slepian, Jan & Seidler, Ann. 1980. The Cat Who Wore a Pot on Her Head. Scholastic Inc.

- #20 Funny Hats
(Visual Discrimination)
Parkes, Brenda. 1986. Who's In the Shed? Rigby.
- #21 Flower Baskets
(Sequencing)
Martin, Bill. 1970. Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- #22 Waddler Wedding
(Rhyming)
O'Donnell, Elizabeth Lee. 1989. I Can't Get My Turtle to Move. Harcourt Brace.
- #23 Apple Polishing
(Size Seriation of Geometric Shapes)
Asch, Frank. 1981. Just Like Daddy. Harcourt Brace.
- #24 Crab Castle
(Numbers to 10)
Hillman, Janet. 1989. Chicken Little. Rigby.
- #25 Mr. Tubb's Tall Ties
(Patterning)
Gelman, Rita Golden. 1977. More Spaghetti I Say. Scholastic Inc.
- #26 Propeller Pete
(Rhyming)
Pellowski, Michael J. 1986. Benny's Bad Day. Troll Associates.
- #27 Apples to Apples
(Visual Discrimination)
Lillie, Patricia. 1991. When the Rooster Crowed. Harcourt Brace.
- #28 Down By Bear Brook
(Sounds b, c, d, f)
Dariel, Alan & Lea, illus. 1992. Old MacDonald Had a Farm. The Wright Group.

Appendix M

Take Home Bag Parent Letter

Dear Parents,

Starting next week each Monday we are school, your child will have an opportunity to bring a Take Home Bag home for overnight. Inside this bag will be a learning activity type of game. These games are to reinforce skills and provide a time for you and your child to work together. These games are intended to be at a level so frustration will be minimal. As we learn more skills, I will change the games to meet the needs of the students. There will also be a book for someone in the family to read to your child. I will include a short evaluation form to be completed at the end of each activity. On Tuesday the Take Home Bag should be returned to me.

Your child will be able to bring home these bags only if you will sign and return the bottom of this form to me.

I hope your child will enjoy the activity but will also assume responsibility to take care of the materials included in the bag. If something were to be damaged, please let me know right away.

The Take Home Bag needs to be returned the next day so I can get it ready to send with my other class.

I know this will be a valuable learning experience for your child.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dashner

_____ may bring a Take Home Bag home each
(child's name)

Monday starting on September 18, 1995.

(Parent's name)

Appendix N

Take Home Bag Evaluation

Parent Comments

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO FILL THIS OUT

Child's name _____

Envelope Number _____

We used the take home bag yes no

My child enjoyed the book yes no

My child enjoyed the activity yes no

The directions were easy to

follow yes no

The activity was - easy average hard - for my
child.

Signature

Comments or suggestions:

My Writing Log



Appendix P
Writing Checklist

Name _____

Level of Writing	Date of Mastery
Pictures only	_____
Scribbles	_____
Writes letters randomly	_____
Repeated letters or name	_____
Uses initial consonant for words	_____
Has partial phonetic spelling	_____
Spacing between words	_____
Uses correct spelling	_____
Additional skills noted:	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Appendix Q

Sixth Grade Training Session

1. Introduce the program.

A sixth grade student will be paired with a kindergarten student to be reading buddies for a 20-30 minute block of time one day a week.

2. Set guidelines:

a. Role of sixth grader is to help kindergartner enjoy books, not to teach them to read.

b. Sixth grader will select the book and practice reading the book prior to coming to kindergarten room.

c. Read the story and discuss pictures. May even read the story a second time. Use the guide sheets to discuss the story. Many times the sixth grader will be assisting the kindergartner in making pictures to remember the book and writing about the picture.

d. May work any place you wish in the room - once the spot is selected, must remain there for the work time.

e. Working type of noise is expected.

f. If the activity for the day is not finished, complete it next week before starting a new book.

g. Let me know right away if a kindergartner is not being cooperative.

h. Box on my desk where suggestions or notes may be left for me.

3. Explain materials.

a. Folder which is in the kindergarten room has a chart for recording the books read, guide questions, and pictures made together.

b. Each month a new selection of books will be available.

c. Use student's crayons. Other materials of pencils, paper, and markers will be supplied.

4. Answer questions.

Appendix R

Kindergarten/Sixth Grade Reading Chart

Date	6th Grade Reader	Title of Book	Reaction

Appendix S

Reading Buddy Story Guide Questions

These questions are to be considered only a guide.

1. Where does the picture take place? Tell me about it.
2. Stopping at a certain page, what do you think will happen next?
3. Where did the story take place?
4. Describe your favorite character.
5. How did your favorite character change during the book?
6. What happened first, second, last?
7. What two characters are alike (or are different)?
8. What do you think might happen to the main character after the book?
9. Why did you like this story?
10. Tell me about anything that has happened to you that is similar to an incident in the story.
11. Think of a question to ask me about the book.
12. Be creative - make up any question you think of about the story.

ENJOY THE STORY !!!

Appendix T

Reading Buddy Evaluation

1. Do you enjoy reading with your reading buddy?

Yes No Sometimes

2. Do you like the writing/drawing activities you did together?

Yes No Sometimes

3. What do you like best about the reading buddy program?

4. What do you like least about the reading buddy program?

5. Would you like to continue being a reading buddy?

Yes No Maybe

Why?
